

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 SS-15 PM-07 EB-11 DODE-00 NASA-04

NSF-04 OTPE-00 NSC-10 L-03 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 RSR-01 /084 W
----- 083850

R 290830 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5418

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0870

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TSPA, NASA, MA

SUBJ: RENEWAL OF NASA TRACKING STATION AGREEMENT WITH GOMR

BEGIN SUMMARY: WE RECOMMEND US SEEK THREE- YEAR EXTENSION OF NASA TRACKING STATION AGREEMENT BY EXCHANGE NOTES WITH MALAGASY GOVERNMENT. TO TRY AVOID GENERATING POSSIBLY UNMANAGEABLE REQUEST FOR QUID PRO QUO, WE STRONGLY BELIEVE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE KEPT IN AS LOW KEY AS POSSIBLE. END SUMMARY.

1. WE RECOMMEND US SEEK 3- YEAR EXTENSION OF NASA TRACKING STATION AGREEMENT WITH GOMR ON ITS EXPIRATION AT END 1973. WE BELIEVE EXTENSION EXISTING AGREEMENT WITHOUT ANY SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES BY SIMPLE EXCHANGE NOTES WITH GOMJE OFFERS BEST POSSIBILITY FOR ACHIEVING OBJECTIVE WITHOUT COMPLICATIONS.

2. WE SUGGEST THAT DEPT AND NASA AVOID RAISING EXTENSION OF AGREEMENT WITH MALAGASY FONMIN RATSIRAKA DURING HIS VISIT TO US STARTING 23 JUL. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT, IF MATTER BROUGHT UP WITH HIM, IT COULD LEAD TO HIS INCREASING HIS DEMANDS ON US DURING HIS VISIT.

3. IF HE SHOULD TAKE INITIATIVE IN BRINGING UP MATTER, IT WILL OF COURSE HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH. UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES,
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STANCES WE WOULD SUGGEST DEPT/ NASA ENDEAVOR CONFINE RESPONSE TO INDICATION WE SHALL BE INTERESTED IN RENEWAL AND SHALL TAKE MATTER UP WITH GOMR AT LATER TIME.

4. IN OUR VIEW, TACTICS OFFERING BEST POSSIBILITY FOR ACHIEVING EXTENSION OF AGREEMENT WITHOUT GENERATING POSSIBLY UNMANAGEABLE REQUEST FOR QUID PRO QUO ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) MAKE EVERY ENDEAVOR KEEP NEGOTIATION OF NEW AGREEMENT IN LOWEST POSSIBLE KEY. THUS NEGOTIATION SHOULD BE HANDLED BY EMBASSY ALONE UNLESS PROBLEMS ARISE.

(B) RAISE EXTENSION OF EXISTING AGREEMENT WITH FONMIN ABOUT ONE MONTH AFTER FONMIN'S RETURN FROM US VISIT. SHOULD NOT DELAY LONGER AS MATTER WILL EVENTUALLY REQUIRE MALAGASY COUNCIL MINISTERS APPROVAL, WHICH MAY TAKE SOME TIME. TIME-TABLE MAY HAVE TO BE ALTERED SOMEWHAT, DEPENDING ON TRAVEL SCHEDULE OF FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS CONCERNED.

(C) DCM WOULD INITIALLY BRING UP EXTENSION VERBALLY WITH FOREIGN OFFICE DIRECTOR BILATERAL RELATIONS RATSIMANDRESY (WHO ACCOMPANYING RATSIRAKA ON US TRIP). DCM WOULD SHOW HIM DRAFT OF NOTE WHICH WOULD PROPOSE 3- YEAR EXTENSION OF EXISTING AGREEMENT WITHOUT CHANGE. DRAFT NOTE WOULD FURTHER STATE THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY'S NOTE OF ACCEPTANCE IN REPLY WOULD BE CONSIDERED AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS.

(D) IF NO PROBLEMS APPEARED, EMBASSY WOULD PROCEED

TO FORMAL EXCHANGE OF NOTES.

5. WE HAVE HAD NO INDICATION TO DATE OF ANY PROBLEMS WITH GOMR ABOUT EXTENSION OF AGREEMENT. IN FACT, ONLY SIGNS AVAILABLE HAVE POINTED TO GOMR'S DESIRE RETAIN STATION. FOR EXAMPLE, FONMIN'S EXCHANGE WITH ME LAST FALL OVER POSSIBILITY STATIONING GOMR REPRESENTATIVE AT STATION (WHICH COULD COME UP AGAIN DURING NEGOTIATIONS) POINTS IN THAT DIRECTION.

6. CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR BILATERAL RELATIONS RATSIMANDRESY AT DINNER 23 JUN ALSO REPRESENTS FAVORABLE OMEN. HE ASKED ME WHY WE ARE WITHDRAWING NASA STATION FROM MADAGASCAR, REALIZING IMMEDIATELY HE HAD IN MIND NOTIFICATION WE HAD SENT FOREIGN OFFICE ON 14 JUN ABOUT NASA INTENTION REMOVE CERTAIN EQUIPMENT FROM MADAGASCAR, I TOLD HIM DCM HAD BEEN TRYING GET APPOINTMENT WITH HIM FOR OVER A WEEK
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TO EXPLAIN WHAT REMOVAL MEANT. (FYI: WE HAD DECIDED SEND ON NOTE WITHOUT WAITING APPOINTMENT BECAUSE OF 30- DAY NOTIFICATION PERIOD PROVIDED IN AGREEMENT AND NASA DESIRE FOR EARLY OUT- SHIPMENT OF EQUIPMENT. END FYI.) I THEN PROCEEDED EXPLAIN TO HIM THAT NASA IS PLANNING REMOVE EQUIPMENT WHICH HAS NOT BEEN USED FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS AT TANANARIVE STATION AND IS NOW NEEDED AT ANOTHER NASA SITE. I SAID THERE IS

NOT ONLY NO INTENTION TO CLOSE STATION, BUT REMOVAL THIS EQUIPMENT DOES NOT EVEN SIGNIFY ANY SCALING DOWN OF ITS ACTIVITIES. RATSIMANDRESY BREATHED BIG SIGH OF RELIEF AND EXPRESSED PLEASURE AT RECEIVING THIS INFORMATION.

7. WE AWARE THAT DEPT FEELS GOMR MAY WISH LIMIT EXTENSION TO ONE YEAR, ANNUALLY RENEWABLE, SINCE THESE ARE TERMS ON WHICH FRENCH NAVAL VESSELS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO DIEGO- SUAREZ BASE IN FUTRUE UNDER NEW FRANCO- MALAGASY ACCORDS. GOMR COULD TAKE SUCH POSITION, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO HINT TO THAT EFFECT TO DATE. WE INCLINED AT THIS STAGE BELIEVE 3- YEAR EXTENSION ACHIEVABLE.

8. ACTING NASA STATION DIRECTOR TURNBULL CONCURS ABOVE. THIS APPROACH ALSO DISCUSSED WITH EDELINE PRIOR HIS DEPART- URE ON HOME LEAVE, AND HE LIKEWISE IN AGREEMENT.

9. IF DEPT AND NASA CONCUR IN ABOVE, WE SHALL CABLE FOR APPROVAL TEXT OF PROPOSED NOTE TO GOMR.
MENDENHALL

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